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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
10/726,329	12/01/2003	Erik E. Emstad	6683.75USU1	3659
43541	7590	03/26/2007	EXAMINER	
WOOD, HERRON & EVANS (ZIMMER SPINE) 2700 CAREW TOWER 441 VINE STREET CINCINNATI, OH 45202			SWIGER III, JAMES L	
ART UNIT		PAPER NUMBER		3733
SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD OF RESPONSE	MAIL DATE	DELIVERY MODE		
3 MONTHS	03/26/2007	PAPER		

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire 6 MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.

Office Action Summary	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	10/726,329	EMSTAD ET AL.	
	Examiner	Art Unit	
	James L. Swiger	3733	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --
Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) OR THIRTY (30) DAYS, WHICHEVER IS LONGER, FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

1) Responsive to communication(s) filed on 18 December 2006.
 2a) This action is FINAL. 2b) This action is non-final.
 3) Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

4) Claim(s) 1-25 is/are pending in the application.
 4a) Of the above claim(s) 22-25 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
 5) Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
 6) Claim(s) 1-21 is/are rejected.
 7) Claim(s) _____ is/are objected to.
 8) Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

9) The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
 10) The drawing(s) filed on 12/1/2003 is/are: a) accepted or b) objected to by the Examiner.
 Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
 Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
 11) The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

12) Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 a) All b) Some * c) None of:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

1) Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
 2) Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
 3) Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO/SB/08)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date 8/28/2006; 12/1/2003

4) Interview Summary (PTO-413)
 Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
 5) Notice of Informal Patent Application
 6) Other: _____

DETAILED ACTION

Election/Restrictions

Applicant's election with traverse of Group I, claims 1-21 in the reply filed on 12/18/2006 is acknowledged. The traversal is on the ground(s) that species B is substantially the same embodiment. The restriction between inventions is made final, however species B will be considered with Species A for the purposes of examination. The requirement is still deemed proper and is therefore made FINAL.

Claims 22-25 withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b), as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Applicant timely traversed the restriction.(election) requirement in the reply filed on 12/18/2006.

Claim Objections

Claim 16 is objected to because of the following informalities:

In line 7, it is suggested to amend claim --an blade-- to "a blade." Appropriate correction is required.

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102

The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

Claim 1 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Jacobson (US Patent 4,545,374). Jacobson discloses a spinal device that is capable of allowing

access to the appropriate region of the spine, and at least specific pedicle locations. Jacobson discloses an instrument that has a portal member (31) that has an elongated aperture (32), a blade member (18, see also fig. 8) that is positionable along the aperture of the portal member with a blade-end, and also a placement wire (33) wherein the blade member is capable of moving relative to the wire in use of the device. The device is also capable of providing access to two pedicle locations due to its elongated shape. Jacobson also has what is considered a stopping structure (36) as it enables two portions at least (wire and portal) to have controlled movement relative to one another. Jacobson also discloses pins (43).

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

Claims 2-13, and 16-21 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Jacobson '374 in view of Simonson (US Publication 2003/0083688). Jacobson discloses the claimed invention *supra* except for a layered, nested, incremental portal assembly in the device. Simonson discloses a nested access cannula that incrementally, and with an elongated shape, provide access to the necessary area of the spine. The nested members also allow the insertion of at least some type of working tool with a blade-like edge (16) so that the structure can provide access to a spinal area requiring surgery. (See also paragraph 0033). Additionally, the

nested members are capable of being altered, moved relative to one another, or manipulated as the surgeon chooses to do so. It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to construct the surgical instrument of Jacobson having at least a layered, nested, and incremental structure in view of Simonson to better use the device and have access to multiple points in surgery.

Allowable Subject Matter

Claims 14-15 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure. See PTO-892.

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to James L. Swiger whose telephone number is 571-272-5557. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Friday, 9:00am to 5:30pm.

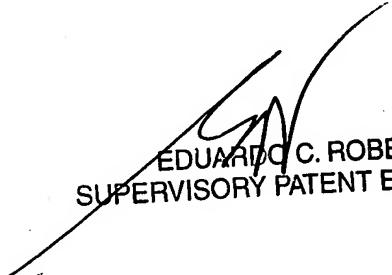
If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Eduardo Robert can be reached on 571-272-4719. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 571-273-8300.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free). If you would like assistance from a USPTO Customer Service Representative or access to the automated information system, call 800-786-9199 (IN USA OR CANADA) or 571-272-1000.



3/19/07

JLS



EDUARDO C. ROBERT
SUPERVISORY PATENT EXAMINER